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TAGS: PREL PGOV ID BM
SUBJECT: BURMA -- BRIEFING INDONESIA ON NEW U.S. APPROACH

REF: JAKARTA 1628 AND PREVIOUS

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: Mission continues to engage Indonesian government and civil society on the results of the USG's Burma policy review. GOI officials praise the U.S. commitment to use a judicious mix of engagement, sanctions, and international and regional coordination to address the situation. Civil society supports our continued objective of progress toward a peaceful, prosperous and reformed Burma. Indonesians--recognizing their role as the leading democracy in the region--want to work with the U.S. on ways to move the process forward. Mission has handed out statements re Burma made by the Secretary and the EAP Assistant Secretary, including his recent testimony given on Capitol Hill. END SUMMARY.

REVIEWING NEW APPROACH WITH GOI CONTACTS

¶2. (U) Mission continues to engage key Indonesian contacts regarding the United States' new approach toward Burma. Mission has briefed Indonesian officials at the Presidential Palace, the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Vice President's Office and key members of Parliament on the new policy. As reported in reflets, Mission contacts have praised the USG's policy review, seeing it as resulting in something more pragmatic and more likely to result in eventual change in Burma. They have also underlined that Indonesia wants to work closely with the U.S. on ways to bring about change in Burma.

MISSION EVENT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

¶3. (U) Mission also hosted a large briefing and discussion on Burma on October 28. The discussion was specifically meant for civil society activists, including those from the women's, labor and general human rights sectors. Officials from the Vice President's Office, members of Parliament (DPR), and officials from the policy planning and human rights offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs also participated in the event.

¶4. (U) Mission officers underscored that the United States has begun a dialogue with the Burmese authorities intended to promote reform and end the country's international isolation.

We explained that the USG continues to seek a unified, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Burma. We realized that neither sanctions nor engagement, implemented alone, have succeeded in transforming Burma. We will continue to press the Burmese government to release all political prisoners--including Aung San Suu Kyi--and begin a genuine dialogue with the democratic opposition and ethnic minority groups. We expect that engagement with the Burmese will be a long slow process.

¶5. (U) Mission officials underscored that Indonesia, as the leading democracy in ASEAN, had a special role to play on this matter. Indonesia, for example, could leverage its Bali

Democracy Forum initiative and engage Burma in the area of elections. Mission also handed out statements re Burma made by the Secretary and the EAP Assistant Secretary, including his recent testimony given on Capitol Hill.

¶6. (U) Indonesian contacts at the event were supportive toward the U.S. approach. A key foreign policy advisor to Vice President Boediono--who had just returned from Myanmar on an official trip--agreed that Indonesia has a special role to play in promoting democracy in Burma. The GOI looks forward to working with us as the new policy moves forward. A DPR member told us that Indonesia's transition from a military-dominated authoritarian government to a democracy--without widespread reprisals against the military--could serve as a model for Burma. Indonesia's success in addressing ethnic separatist conflicts in regions like Aceh could also show Burma how to tackle similar regional problems, the contact related.

NEXT STEPS

¶7. (U) Mission plans to maintain its robust engagement with Indonesian contacts on Burma. This will include further discussions with GOI officials, and outreach to civil society and student groups.

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